



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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HANDLING RAW MEAT AND SEAFOOD POSES HEALTH RISK

HONOLULU – Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is working with retailers in Chinatown and other areas of Oahu, that sell raw unpackaged animal foods, to strengthen safe food handling practices and prevent the possible spread of illness.

Raw meat and seafood can carry disease-causing bacteria such as salmonella, campylobacter and e-coli. If a customer continues shopping after touching raw chicken, beef, or pork they may then spread bacteria to anything else they touch – including other people or food.

“We realize that in many parts of the world, physically handling raw food before making a purchase may be an accepted practice,” said Lance Wong, Hawaii State Department of Health Food and Drug Branch. “But touching raw meat or seafood is prohibited by state law because of the potential to spread disease causing bacteria.”

Health officials are urging all merchants to comply with state law and not allow customers to touch or handle raw meat, chicken or seafood with their bare hands by placing these items behind a display case. The DOH Food and Drug Branch has produced an informational flyer to inform and educate consumers on the “do’s and don’ts” of handling raw unpackaged meat and seafood. The flyer will be distributed to consumers at various Oahu retail locations starting Wednesday, March 16.

(more)

For more information on handling food safely contact the Department of Health, Food and Drug Branch at 586-4725 or visit their web site at www.hawaii.gov/health .

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